

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 310841

NODIS

FOR AM0ASADOR BYROADE AND AMBASSADOR HELMS ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MNVC TECH PARM IR PK

SUBJECT: BHUTTO VISIT TO TEHRAN

REF: TEHRAN 12672

1. IT SEEMS HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT BHUTTO WILL RAISE THE NUCLEAR FUEL REPROCESSING PLANT/A-7 ISSUE WITH THE SHAH WHEN HE SEES HIM. IN VIEW OF THE KEY ROLE WHICH IRAN PLAYS IN PAKISTAN'S POLICY DECISIONS AND IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY MIS-UNDERSTANDINGS, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR AMBASSADOR HELMS TO BRIEF THE SHAH ON OUR CURRENT POSITION AND APPROACH TO THIS MATTER.

2. UNLESS EITHER OF YOU SEES OBJECTIONS THAT ARE NOT APPARENT TO US, AMBASSADOR HELMS SHOULD APPROACH SHAH ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES.

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-- WE HAVE BEEN GIVING VERY SERIOUS THOUGHT TO THE POINTS MADE ON PAKISTAN'S REPROCESSING PLANS DURING OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH YOU AND PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO LAST SUMMER. SINCE THEN, AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE COMPLETED OUR NUCLEAR POLICY REVIEW AND WE HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE FURTHER WITH THE INCOMING ADMINISTRATION AND THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT.

ON THIS BASIS, WE HAVE RAISED THIS ISSUE ONCE AGAIN WITH PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO AND WE WISH TO ADVISE YOU IN THE

STRICTEST CONFIDENCE OF OUR JUDGMENTS AND THE APPROACH WE ARE TAKING.

-- WE ARE SPEAKING TO PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO IN TERMS OF OUR LONGSTANDING COMMITMENT TO CLOSE TIES WITH PAKISTAN, AND OUR CONCERN ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF HIS COUNTRY'S REPROCESSING PROJECT FOR OUR FUTURE RELATIONS. THIS IS AN ISSUE TO WHICH THE INCOMING ADMINISTRATION WILL ATTACH THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE. IT WILL NOT GO AWAY, NOR DO WE FEEL THAT IT CAN BE RESOLVED BY SUPPLEMENTAL SAFEGUARDS AS BHUTTO HAS SUGGESTED. OUR EXPERTS HAVE EXAMINED THIS POSSIBILITY AND DO NOT BELIEVE IT IS TECHNICALLY SOUND. MOST FUNDAMENTALLY, U.S. POLICY IS FIRMLY BASED ON OPPOSITION TO THE SPREAD OF NATIONAL REPROCESSING FACILITIES EVEN IF THESE COULD BE SAFEGUARDED, GIVEN THE SECURITY RISKS INHERENT IN THE CAPABILITY TO PRODUCE PLUTONIUM.

-- WE HAVE RECENTLY REITERATED TO PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO THE DRACONIAN EFFECT THROUGH CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON U.S. ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO PAKISTAN IF THE REPROCESSING PROJECT PROCEEDS. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE HAVE MADE CLEAR THE POLITICAL REALITY THAT THE SYMINGTON AMENDMENT WOULD BE IMPOSED UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. WE ARE FRANKLY CONCERNED THAT OUR OVERALL RELATIONSHIP WILL BE GRAVELY IMPAIRED, THAT AS A RESULT THE COSTS WILL FAR OUTWEIGH ANY CONCEIVABLE BENEFIT IN GOING AHEAD, AND THAT A COMPROMISE ON THIS PROBLEM IS IN PAKISTAN'S OWN BEST
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INTERESTS.

-- WE FULLY APPRECIATED FROM THE OUTSET THE DIFFICULTIES THAT OUTRIGHT CANCELLATION OF THE REPROCESSING PROJECT WOULD PRESENT. THAT IS WHY THE SECRETARY PROPOSED IN LAHORE INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT RATHER THAN CANCELLATION WHICH WOULD PERMIT PAKISTAN TO MEET ALL ITS NUCLEAR ENERGY NEEDS THROUGH FRENCH REACTORS, A FUEL FABRICATION PLANT AND ASSURED NUCLEAR FUEL, WITH U.S. FINANCIAL SUPPORT IF PAKISTAN WISHED TO HAVE IT. WE RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF MEETING PAKISTAN'S ENERGY NEEDS AND WE ARE PREPARED TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE EFFORTS IN THIS AREA, AS LONG AS THESE DO NOT EXTEND INTO SENSITIVE NUCLEAR FACILITIES FOR WHICH PAKISTAN HAS NO LEGITIMATE REQUIREMENT.

--IN SHORT, THE POSSIBILITIES DISCUSSED WITH PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO LAST AUGUST STAND AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED. AT LEAST UP TO JANUARY 20TH, WE CAN TELL YOU THAT WE WOULD

RECOMMEND TO THE CONGRESS APPROVAL OF A-7S AND OTHER MILITARY TRANSFERS TO PAKISTAN IF THERE CAN BE AGREEMENT ON DEFERRAL OF REPROCESSING. FAILING SUCH AGREEMENT, WE ARE CONVINCED CONGRESS WOULD DISAPPROVE SUCH TRANSFERS.

-- IF BHUTTO MOVES IN THIS DIRECTION NOW, WE BELIEVE THAT WE COULD BE IN A POSITION TO HELP, AND WE WOULD BE RECEPTIVE TO ANY SUGGESTIONS AS TO HOW TO FACILITATE PAKISTAN'S AGREEMENT NOT TO PROCEED. THE FORMULA COULD BE ALONG THE LINES OF IRAN'S OWN AGREEMENTS WITH NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS.

-- SO AS TO AVOID EXPLICIT UNILATERAL INITIATIVE ON THE REPROCESSING ISSUE, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO CHARACTERIZE THE AGREEMENT TO DEFER AS A DECISION JOINTLY ARRIVED AT BY BOTH PARTIES TO THE CONTRACT. ON THIS BASIS, WE COULD ALL MOVE TOGETHER TOWARD MEETING PAKISTAN'S ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND MILITARY NEEDS.

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-- AT A MINIMUM, HOWEVER, WE ARE SUGGESTING TO BHUTTO THAT HE AGREE TO DEFER CONSTRUCTION OF THE REPROCESSING PROJECT. THIS WOULD GIVE ALL PARTIES TIME TO SEEK A FORMULA OF DEFERRAL IN CONJUNCTION WITH DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE NUCLEAR AND NONNUCLEAR ENERGY SOURCES.

-- WE RECOGNIZE IRAN'S CRUCIAL ROLE IN STABILITY IN THE REGION. WE HAVE WELCOMED YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF OUR SERIOUS CONCERN ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF A NATIONAL PLUTONIUM CAPABILITY IN PAKISTAN, AND OUR INTEREST IN AVOIDING A CONFRONTATION WITH THE GOP. WE WANT TO CONTINUE OUR CO-OPERATION IN MEETING PAKISTAN'S SECURITY NEEDS, BUT PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO MUST BE CONVINCED THAT BOTH THESE NEEDS AND HIS PEACEFUL NUCLEAR PLANS WILL BE BEST SERVED BY NOT PROCEEDING WITH HIS REPROCESSING PROJECT. WE WOULD WELCOME YOUR SUPPORT ON THIS ISSUE IN DISCUSSIONS WITH BHUTTO IF YOU JUDGE THIS WOULD BE IN IRAN'S INTEREST ALSO.
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